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TO BREMER FOR THE SECRETARY

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SUBJ: JAMES J. KILPATRICK INTERVIEW W/PRES. NIXON.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW IN THE OVAL OFFICE ON TUESDAY MORNING FOR AN HOUR AND 20 MINUTES.

PRESIDENT NIXON WILL NOT RESIGN "UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES." HE WILL NOT SURRENDER HIS OFFICE EVEN TEMPORARILY TO VICE PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD UNDER THE 25TH AMENDMENT.

IF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD VOTE TO IMPEACH, HE WILL ACCEPT THE VERDICT "WITH GOOD GRACE," HE WILL THEN DEFEND HIMSELF TO THE VERY END OF A SENATE TRIAL.

THE PRESIDENT MADE THESE VIEWS PERFECTLY CLEAR--EMPHATICALLY CLEAR.

HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD GIVEN "LONG THOUGHT" TO THE POSSIBILITY OF RESIGNATION, FOR ONE OVERRIDING REASON HE HAS NOW DISCARDED THAT OPTION AND WILL NOT CONSIDER IT AGAIN. FOR HIM TO RESIGN UNDER THE PRESSURE OF MERE POPULAR OPINION, IN HIS VIEW, WOULD FATALLY WEAKEN PRESIDENTS OF THE FUTURE.

AS FOR TAKING TEMPORARY REFUGE IN THE 25TH AMENDMENT: THIS A "RATHER FATUOUS SUGGESTION," ADVANCED BY PEOPLE WHO "DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE WORLD."

THE PRESIDENT TALKED SOBERLY AND SADLY OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR. HE SAID IT WAS TRUE, AS JOHN MITCHELL HAD SURMISED, THAT HE WOULD HAVE "BLOWN MY TOP" IF HE HAD KNOWN OF THE BUGGING AT THE TIME.

HE REACTED EVEN TO SHARP QUESTIONS WITH QUIET GOOD HUMOR.

MR. NIXON ALSO DISCUSSED THE NOW FAMOUS WHITE HOUSE TAPES:

\*\*\*\*\*WHSR COMMENT\*\*\*\*\*

JANKA,MCFARLANE,SECFL

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HE THOUGHT HE WAS WRONG EVER TO HAVE PERMITTED THESE RECORDINGS IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT HE SUPPOSED THE REMAINING TAPES EVENTUALLY WILL BE DEPOSITED IN A PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY FOR THE USE OF HISTORIANS 25 OR 30 YEARS HENCE, AFTER THE PARTICIPANTS ARE DEAD.

IN A LONG SOLILOQUY, MR. NIXON SPOKE OF THE NEED FOR A STRONG AMERICAN PRESIDENT, EQUIPPED BY EXPERIENCE TO DEAL AT THE SUMMIT WITH WORLD LEADERS. HE WAS ASKED WHETHER, IF WORST COMES TO WORST, AND HE IS PUT ON TRIAL BY THE SENATE, HE COULD SIMULTANEOUSLY MANAGE THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY AND LOOK AFTER HIS OWN DEFENSE. "YES," HE SAID GRIMLY. "AND I INTEND TO."

TO KILPATRICK, IT SEEMED EVIDENT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS LOST SOME OF THE EDGE OF SHARP INCISIVENESS THAT HE EXHIBITED A FEW YEARS AGO. HIS CONVERSATION TENDS TO RUN OFF ON TANGENTS. A REPORTER, STUDYING HIS SHORTHAND NOTES, FINDS THEM LITTERED WITH BROKEN SENTENCES. BUT THE PRESIDENT PLAINLY IS IN COMMAND OF HIS SITUATION: "I AM A DISCIPLINED MAN," HE SAID AT ONE POINT. MOR.

INVESTIGATION WOULD BECOME ENTANGLED WITH CIA OPERATIONS IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY, AND THIS HE WAS DETERMINED TO AVOID. THE THOUGHT NEVER CROSSED HIS MIND, HE, THAT BLACKMAIL, AND A COVER-UP MIGHT EMERGE.

THE CONVERSATION TURNED TO GENERAL COMMENT ON THE NECESSITY, AS THE PRESIDENT SEES IT, FOR SECRECY IN THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

"YOU CANNOT IN TODAY'S WORLD HAVE SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY WITHOUT SECRECY. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. I USED TO SAY THAT I BELIEVE IN THE WILSONIAN DOCTRINE OF OPEN COVENANTS OPENLY ARRIVED AT. BUT THAT WAS WILSON AT HIS IDEALISTIC BEST AND HIS PRAGMATIC WORST. OPEN COVENANTS, YES; THERE SHOULD BE NO SECRET AGREEMENTS THAT THE COUNTRY IS NOT TOTALLY COMMITTED TO. BUT OPENLY ARRIVED AT, THERE WOULD BE NO COVENANTS. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. AND IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPOSSIBLE WHEN YOU ARE DEALING NOT WITH YOUR FRIENDS, BUT WITH YOUR ADVERSARIES."

SURELY THIS WAS TRUE, THE PRESIDENT SAID, IN THE OPENING TO CHINA. IT NEVER WOULD HAVE OCCURRED WITHOUT THE HIGHEST SECRECY. NOBODY KNEW ABOUT THE OVERTURES SAVE THE PRESIDENT, HENRY KISSINGER, AND A FEW AIDES SWORN TO SECRECY. MR. NIXON WAS ASKED: DID HIS VICE PRESIDENT KNOW?

"AGNEW?" THE PRESIDENT SEEMED INCREDULOUS. "AGNEW? OH, OF COURSE NOT."  
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